



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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Save the Dates

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Mark your calendars! The IM Project is hosting a retreat at the end of the Governor's Emergency Preparedness Summit on April 24 and 25 at the Holiday Inn in Billings. County Commissioners, fire chiefs and other opinion leaders are encouraged to attend. National Governor's Association facilitators will assist with the retreat. Look for more information in the HAM!

The 2008 Montana APCO Conference is scheduled for October 22-23 in Billings at the Billings Hotel. Additionally, APCO International's popular Active Shooter Incidents for Public Safety Communications course has been scheduled for October 21 at the same location to coincide with the conference. Watch for details on the Montana APCO web site: <http://www.mtapco.org>.

Environmental Assessment Signed

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

A major milestone was reached when the U.S. Air Force Environmental Assessment was recently signed. The assessment analyzed the potential for impacts to the environment as a result of establishing and/or modifying 11 communications sites in the Central Montana Interoperability Communications Consortium (CMICC). The assessment resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONS), meaning that proposed construction activities would not have a significant effect on human health or the natural environment. Work can now commence on issuing contracts for construction of communications sites in the consortium.

Western Interoperability Consortium Meeting

By Pete Mohan pmohan@mt.gov

The Western Interoperability Communications Consortium (WICC) met at the Missoula County Courthouse on Feb. 19. Consortium Project Director, George Guppton, reported on the recent Interoperability Montana (IM) Project Directors (IMPD) meeting. Members also discussed how Interlocal Agreements (ILA) impact the governance of the IM Project. In addition, members reviewed various staffing issues and proposals. Board members also discussed the requirement to have site lease and site user agreements as well as easements fully completed and signed.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 25 at 10:00 am at the Ravalli County Courthouse, 205 Bedford, in Hamilton.

Warren Dupuis Accepts New Position

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

State of Montana employee Warren Dupuis has accepted a new position within the Dept. of Administration, Information Technology Services Division (ITSD). Formerly with the Policy and Planning Services Bureau (PPSB), which provided financial guidance and oversight to the IM Project and the entire IT department, Warren will be now working as a Program Manager for the Chief Information Officer.

Warren's expertise and support were invaluable to the IM Project. We wish him the very best in his new position.

Eastern Tier Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Eastern Tier Interoperability Consortium (ETIC) met in Glendive on Wed., Feb. 20. Chief Alan Michaels gave an overview of the most recent Interoperability Montana (IM) Project Directors meeting as well as the IM Governance Committee and Finance Sub-Committee. Chief Michaels explained the importance of having a complete and accurate budget as well as the ability to track funding sources.

Ideas for educating county commissioners were discussed, such as distributing the IM Fact Sheet and/or copies of the *Montana Policy Review*, inviting the local project director to a meeting of the county commissioners, showing PowerPoint presentations about the IM Project, and hosting a meeting of the consortium in one's own community.

Discussion took place about the second Master Control Site. Four sites are being evaluated by an outside contractor. The legislature appropriated \$3.5 million for the second Master Control Site.

Chief Michaels distributed copies of the most recent IM Network map, and he discussed partnerships that have been developed over the last few years with the National Guard, the U.S. Air Force and the BNSF Railway. An opportunity for a possible new ETIC partnership also was discussed.

Denny Palmer, Richland County, gave a report on the recent ETIC Technical Committee meeting that took place in Broadus on Feb. 1. They are working on getting all site and user agreements and easements in place. For the upcoming round of FEMA Assistance to Fire Fighters grant, the consortium also is currently gathering needed statistics.

The next meeting will be March 26 at 10:00 am in Miles City at a location to be announced.



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I-15/90 Corridor Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The I-15/90 Corridor Interoperability Consortium met Thurs., Feb. 21, at the Butte Chamber of Commerce. Project Director Dave McPherson informed the group that the equipment being acquired through the FEMA Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant has been ordered, and it is expected to be delivered by the end of March. Tom Dunne, Dunne Communications, reported on the details of the equipment order. Warranty and firmware issues were discussed. The group also discussed technical specifications of mobile antennas.

Bob McWilliams reported that the Dillon Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) held two public informational meetings last month to discuss proposed IM radio sites on BLM and Forest Service administered lands in Beaverhead and Madison counties. It is anticipated that work may begin this summer on the KONA, Maurer Mountain, Sawtell and Virginia City Pass sites. Roger Smith, Montana Highway Patrol, spoke about the IM Network and specific microwave shots.

Dave McPherson said that the FCC has indicated that the I-15/90 consortium's frequencies are out for public comment that will end Feb. 26. Bob McWilliams reported on a Lewis and Clark County request for Letters of Concurrence (LOC's) on some frequencies. He will be analyzing the technical aspects of the request. Frequency and site agreement work on the Sawtell site has begun. A meeting at the site is scheduled for March 4. Beaverhead County plans to be the site manager. A partnership with Fremont County in Idaho may also be possible at that site.

Wing Spooner, PSSB, gave an update on the Peer Review Process used to evaluate State Communications Interoperability Plans (SCIP) and Investment Justifications for the Public Safety Interoperability Communications (PSIC) grant.

Dave McPherson updated consortium members about the last IMPD meeting, and announced that Chief Alan Michaels was elected as the new Chair of the IMPD. The staffing sub-committee had four proposals for the IMPD to review.

The next consortium meeting will begin at 10:00 am at the Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St., on Thurs., March 20.

Four-State 9-1-1 Confab Planned

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

An informal gathering of 9-1-1 leaders from four states will take place in Bowman, North Dakota on

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March 14 to share maps, ideas and best practices among bordering dispatch communities. States represented are: Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. The meeting begins at 10:00 am in the Dakota Room of the Bowman County Courthouse, 104 1st Street NW.

Chuck Lee, Fallon County 9-1-1, indicated that sometimes a person from a particular county who needs emergency services may be better served by another county's ambulance or fire services. This gathering will give dispatchers and other emergency responders the opportunity to build relationships, discuss Mutual Aid issues prior to this year's fire season, and exchange map and GIS data. For more information, contact Chuck at (406) 778-7121.

Upcoming Meetings

February 27

Tri-County Consortium • Helena • 10:00 am
DOC Annex Conf Rm.; Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

February 27-29

IWCE Conference and Exposition
Las Vegas, NV

February 28

Mobile Data Terminal Consortium
Bozeman • 10:00 am
Best Western City Center Conf. Rm.; 507 W Main St.

February 28

Big Sky 11 • Billings • 10:00 am
Yellowstone County Fire Station (EOC); 2305 8th Ave N.

March 3

IMGC Finance Sub-Committee
Helena • 9:00 am - Noon
Northrop Grumman Offices, 2401 Colonial Drive
IM Governance Committee
Helena • Noon - 5:00 pm
DOC Annex Conf. Rm.; Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

March 4

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm • State Capitol

March 5

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)
Great Falls • 10:00 am • Wheat Building; 750 6th Street SW

March 12

Statewide Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC)
Helena • 10:00 am - Noon • Rm. 152, State Capitol

March 13

South Central MT Interoperability Consortium (SCMIC)
White Sulphur Springs • 10:00 am
White Sulfur Springs Training Center (Next to the Sheriff's Office 101, W. Crawford St.)

March 14

Four-State 9-1-1 Confab
Bowman, ND • 10:00 am
Bowman County Courthouse, 104 1st Street NW

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